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Civic League St. Louis

Report on the St. Louis Workhouse



Civic League
September 1911

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FOREWORD.

The following is an abstract of an elaborate report on the St. Louis Workhouse made by the Social Service Committee of the League, Mr. E. M. Grossman, Chairman. The report was drawn up by a sub-committee consisting of Mr. Grossman, Rev. Geo. R. Dodson, Miss Mary E. Bulkley, Mr. Hugh M. Fullerton and Roger N. Baldwin. The report has the approval of the entire committee and of the Executive Board of the League.

The complete report, which covers some forty typewritten pages, is not printed, chiefly because a large part of the material would not be of general public interest. The League has on file at the office, however, a number of these typewritten copies, which are available for the use of any member of the League who may care to read it in full. The essential points are all brought out in this abstract.

The report was compiled from information secured by members of the committee through a personal investigation. Mr. Fullerton was sent, at the expense of the League, to Chicago and Cleveland for the purpose of making an exact inquiry in those cities. The entire report has been read and verified by both the former and present superintendents of the Workhouse, the Mayor's Secretary and other municipal officials connected with the administration of the Workhouse and the police courts. We are confident, therefore, that the facts as stated are essentially accurate.

It should be emphasized that the unfortunate conditions in our care of offenders committed to the Workhouse are not due to negligence or poor administration. They are the faults of a system, as set forth so ably in the report quoted from the Russell Sage Foundation publication. Our object will be accomplished if this report, in calling attention to the system, brings about action by the Municipal Assembly looking to a just solution of the present evils.

EXECUTIVE BOARD,

SAUNDERS NORVELL, President.

ROGER N. BALDWIN, Secretary.

REPORT ON THE ST. LOUIS WORKHOUSE.

I. HISTORICAL:

1. Origin and Early History:

The city workhouse was established by an ordinance passed July 28, 1841.

The present Workhouse on Broadway and Meramec street, fronting on the bluff overlooking the Mississippi River and extending down to the water's edge, was established in 1853. The institution was built by prison labor, of rock quarried on the ground. *Two of the three buildings then built are still in use.* The first cell-house (now being remodeled) is the present women's quarters.

2. The Law:

The Charter provides that the city may purchase and hold property for a workhouse, *either within or without the city limits*, and may issue bonds for its construction. Regarding commitments and treatment of prisoners in the institution the Charter says:

"Any offender who shall neglect, or refuse to pay any fine, penalty and costs that may have been imposed upon him or her, shall be committed to the workhouse, or, in case of women, in such other place as for them may be provided, until such fine, penalty, and costs be fully paid: provided, that no such imprisonment shall exceed six months for any one offense. Every person so committed to the workhouse, or such other place aforesaid, shall be required to work for the city, at such labor as his or her health and strength will permit, within or without said workhouse or other place, not exceeding ten hours each working day; and for such work the person so employed shall be allowed, exclusive of his or her board, fifty cents per day for each day's work, on account of said fine and costs."

The Charter also provides that the Superintendent shall be appointed by the Mayor for a term of four years, subject to approval by the Council. All other provisions affecting the workhouse are matters of ordinance regulation.

WHAT COURTS COMMIT:

The workhouse receives prisoners from three sets of courts—the police courts, which commit offenders who are unable to pay their fines; the two divisions of the Court of Criminal Correction and the three criminal divisions of the Circuit Court. No commitment from the criminal courts may exceed one year on any one charge, and none from a police court may exceed six months. The commitments from the criminal courts are sentences for offenses against the law, both in misdemeanor and felony cases. *The police judges, however, have no authority to sentence a man direct to the workhouse.* The commitments from the police courts come through the quasi-criminal nature of police court procedure, by which offenders against city ordinances *are virtually imprisoned for debt*—that is, for inability to pay the city the amount owed as a fine.

THE SYSTEM UNJUST:

This system of commitment from the various courts under really different theories, results in a fundamental practical difficulty in dealing with the problem of the workhouse as a social institution, *because the system oftentimes frees the habitual offender who has money, or friends with money to pay fines, while those too poor to pay are compelled to serve time. Many are committed from whom society does not need protection, and who are in no sense criminal, and many escape commitment who need the corrective influence of imprisonment.*

The Charter provides that the rate of payment for a man's work in the Workhouse working out a fine shall be computed at fifty cents per day, Sundays and holidays excluded. The Mayor has absolute power of parole over police-court offenders through the remission of fines by the exercise of executive clemency.

3. Recent History and Tendencies:

The Workhouse has in the past been very badly managed and subject to all kinds of political and personal influence, both in its management and in the admission and discharge of its inmates. The last few years the institution has markedly improved and has been conducted about as well as could be expected with its faulty equipment and overcrowded condition.

4. Financial:

The cost of the workhouse has varied very largely, in some years it being an expense to the city and in other years returning a profit on the work done by prisoners. In 1905-06, for instance, there was an excess of \$8,380.23, the expenses having been \$70,347.44 and the receipts \$78,727.67, as follows:

Value of products and labor furnished city departments.....	\$70,615.42
Fines received by the Superintendent.....	8,112.25
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	\$78,727.67

Properly speaking, the fines should not be included in the account, so that the excess of earnings over expenditures was only about \$300.

In 1908-09 the excess of earnings over expenditures was about \$3,000.00, the total expenditures being \$91,894 and the value of the products and labor \$94,909.50.

During the other years since 1905 the workhouse has not been on a paying basis, the deficit in 1907-08 running as high as \$15,666.75.

If the amount of fines, which really should not be credited to earnings, is deducted, the excess of expenditures over earnings in that year was almost \$24,000.

II. STUDY OF THE WORKHOUSE POPULATION:

In the ten years ending April 1, 1910, 31,354 commitments were made to the Workhouse, *an average of 3,135 a year.* The number of commitments each year increased from 2,095 in 1901 to 3,724 in 1907, the highest number in any one year.

Since 1907 the commitments each year have numbered—3,429 in 1908, 3,493 in 1909 and 3,025 in 1910.

These figures indicate pretty clearly the business of the courts in relation to the Workhouse, but they do not indicate clearly the administrative problems of the Workhouse, which are best indicated by the figures of its *daily* population. Remembering that the normal capacity of the Workhouse is 400 persons, it is somewhat disturbing to know that *the daily average which was 334 in 1901, increased to 697 in 1908. The maximum daily population has been as high as 900.* During 1909 the *average* dropped to 528, still overcrowding the quarters. The maximum daily population during 1910 was 587 on April 11th; the minimum, 359, on November 14th.

It is interesting in this connection to know that during this period of increase in the average daily population, *the average daily number of women has either remained practically the same or has slightly decreased.*

The explanation of the increase in the daily average lies in the increase in the average term of commitment. The average length of each *commitment* in 1901 was *only forty-nine days*, while it was *seventy-nine days in 1909.* This is due in part, at least, to stiffer fines and fewer paroles.

RECORDS VERY SCANT:

The records of the Workhouse, as of the police courts, are extremely scant, covering only the legal necessities of the cases. Practically no information can be obtained regarding the social factors, such as ages, previous commitments, marital state, resident or transient, etc. *No really comprehensive study can be made nor any really scientific remedies offered until these social facts are recorded and carefully studied.*

Some facts of value, however, can be gained from the scant records kept and from certain estimates more or less carefully made by the Workhouse authorities.

NUMBER AND CHARACTER OF COMMITMENTS:

It appears that during the period between April, 1909, and April, 1910, 3,025 commitments were made to the institution; 625, or 20.6% were women; 330 or *practically 10% were boys or girls between the ages of sixteen and twenty years (256 boys and 74 girls).*

It is interesting to note that 254 persons over fifty years of age were committed, who are said by the authorities to be almost exclusively habitual drunkards, practically all of whom have been committed time and again. The Workhouse authorities estimate that *practically 75% of the population at any given time is composed of persons serving a second term or more* in the institution. The same proportion is probably true of the total commitments for any one year.

One woman was pointed out as having served eighteen of the last thirty years of her life in the Workhouse. She has been arrested on an average of six times a year for thirty years. Former Superintendent Dawson remembers arresting her when he was a patrolman on the police force in 1883. She was a police character then. Her sentences have ranged from twelve days to four months, all the

result of police court fines. That and similar cases are a living indictment of the ineffectiveness of our present system of correcting minor crimes.

III. THE CARE AND CORRECTION OF WORKHOUSE PRISONERS:

GENERAL STATEMENT:

An elaborate study was made by the Committee concerning the care of prisoners—their grouping, daily schedule, eating and sleeping arrangements and other matters connected with their daily life. At the time of the investigation in the spring of 1910, the conditions were found to be pretty bad, the buildings being overcrowded, overrun with vermin, and the food served being of an inferior quality and poorly adapted to the work which the prisoners are called upon to do.

Since that time, however, the Board of Public Improvements has made elaborate plans for the reconstruction of a large portion of the Workhouse, which will do away largely with the evils at that time found. For that reason, a description of the living conditions of the prisoners is omitted.

INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES:

When a man is committed to the institution he is asked on entrance as to his occupation. Since most (95%) are unskilled laborers, they are at once sent to the quarry, where a large force of men are kept constantly at work quarrying and breaking rock. The skilled workmen are used in construction and repair work, and in the blacksmith and carpenter shops. A number of the men are detailed to the lighter work about the institution, in the stable, garden and around the yard. Such men are usually the short-term men, who are given this kind of work largely because of the fact that the shortness of their sentences inclines them less toward escaping.

The men who are physically weak are detailed to help in the kitchen and dining room. A number of the older and more decrepit men are sent to work in the laundry, cleaning floors, etc. The construction and repair work is largely done by the prisoners, an engine house being recently built by them and the old cell-house being entirely remodeled by prison labor. There are always a certain number of trustees in the institution, and they are assigned to do the gardening around the outside of the workhouse walls, both in the vegetable garden and on the lawns and flower beds.

THE DIFFICULTY OF PROPER EMPLOYMENT:

It is always a problem to find work enough for the men to do. A rainy day is a particularly difficult problem. The men at the quarry cannot be pushed at their work, because all of the rock which is used on the streets and at the water works could not be used by the city if the men were pushed. When on a rainy day these men are thrown out of work in the quarry there is nothing for them to do but to sit about their cells in idleness.

The women are employed entirely indoors. One-half of them work in the sewing-room mending and making garments for the institution. A number of them do the cleaning of the cell-houses and make the beds. Others are at work in the laundry, which washes all the clothing and bedding for the institution. A few women are detailed to the kitchen and dining-room.

CORRECTION AND REFORMATION :

The entire aspect of the Workhouse routine is one of passive care. Its influence on prisoners, so far as any active effort towards reformation is concerned, is purely negative. The only reformatory influence is that which may be derived from incarceration and the lack of liberty. A few skilled men in the shops have the supervision of a foreman, but it cannot be said that their morals or habits are thereby improved.

The prisoners who misbehave or prove to be incorrigible are punished by a restriction in diet, or by imprisonment in a dungeon. The usual method of punishment at the Workhouse is incarceration in the dungeon, commonly known as the "bull pen." There are three of these in the institution—two for men and one for women. One of them was recently constructed, outside the chapel, in the basement of the new cell-house. They are devoid of furniture or fittings of any kind, are dark, and the one in the women's quarters is without ventilation save for one small opening. Prisoners punished by confinement in the dungeon are fed on bread and water only.

The dungeons are used frequently, being the chief means of discipline in the institution. The length of stay varies from a few hours to as long, in some cases, as two weeks. One prisoner told the story of being shut up in a dungeon in company with a crazy man, who behaved so violently that he was constantly in fear of his life. The Committee has no means of verifying the truth of such a statement.

As in all penal institutions it is difficult to prevent corruption among the attendants. Prisoners are able to bribe them to bring in drugs, such as opium, cocaine, etc., and for other favors which can be had for money. The custom of permitting prisoners to order food and tobacco from the outside, with money given them by friends or relatives, is an incentive to this kind of traffic. The poor prisoner is also put at a disadvantage in getting food, etc., with those fortunate enough to have a little money.

WORKHOUSE DOES NOT REFORM :

It should be pointed out that there is *no attempt made in the slightest degree to exert any reformatory influence on the Workhouse prisoner.* There is no study of the *needs of the individual*, and such an insufficient variety of occupation that it is only roughly adapted to any one. The treatment of the population is *entirely collective and entirely negative.*

IV. THE RELEASE OF PRISONERS.

The best method of seeing just what process secures release is to examine a group in a given year. In 1910, 3,108 prisoners were released from the institution; 1,946, or 63%, were released on the expiration of the sentence of the Criminal Court, or by working out the fine imposed by the Police Court at the rate of 50 cents a day; 547, or 17%, finally managed to summon friends to their aid, who paid their fines and thus secured their releases. *Therefore, a total of 2,493 out of 3,108, or 80%, left the institution free of any further control or supervision.*

One hundred and thirty-five, or 4% of the total, were released on appeal, ha-

beas corpus or commuted sentence—that is, by an order of court, and 21 made their way out by being transferred to the jail, by death, or by escape, 14 finding their way out by the latter means. Four hundred and fifty-nine, or 15% of the total, were paroled either by the Mayor (who has jurisdiction over Police Court cases alone), by the Governor, or by the judges of the criminal courts which committed them.

In the 459 cases paroled, the paroling power had the right of supervision of the life and conduct of every prisoner for a certain length of time after his release. This power was not exercised to any effective degree by the criminal courts, who have no practical means of knowing how paroled prisoners fare, unless by chance they are brought back into the court charged with a new offense. If they report to court the Judge has only their own word as to their habits and behavior.

INTEREST OF THE MAYOR'S OFFICE IN THE WORK:

The Mayor's office, through the Mayor's Secretary, has been anxious to do everything possible to follow up the men paroled through that office. The Mayor's Secretary has interested himself personally in most of the cases, and the police sergeant assigned to the Mayor's office also undertakes a portion of that work. The cases under supervision of the Mayor's office numbered fifteen on January 1, 1911. No men under supervision of the Mayor were reported to the courts for violating their paroles, because the validity of such action is doubtful.

The Mayor's office is very careful in considering applications for parole, refusing a much larger number than it grants. The causes for granting a parole usually are either removal from the city to live in a more favorable environment, destitution of the prisoner's family, exceptional record in the Workhouse, or some error or injustice found in the police court trial. The care of these paroled prisoners is a considerable burden on the Mayor's office and not a desirable function for that office to perform. The success of the work depends entirely upon the personal interest of the Mayor, or the Mayor's Secretary, and it is not related intimately enough to the general system of the care of adult offenders.

During the year 1910 the Mayor practically paroled 357 prisoners by remitting their fines. The following is a list of offenses for which these paroled prisoners were committed by the police courts:

Disturbing the peace	210
Begging	16
Drunk on the street.....	18
Exposing the person.....	16
Inmates or keepers of bawdy houses.....	19
Vagrancy	10
Miscellaneous	68
	<hr/>
	357

Of these 357 paroles practically 90% of them were granted because of the needs of the prisoner's family. In practically all the cases the consent of the complaining witness was required before a parole was granted. Fifty prisoners were paroled largely on account of their good record in the Workhouse, these paroles being granted chiefly at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

V. COMPARISON WITH SIMILAR INSTITUTIONS IN OTHER CITIES:

THE WORKHOUSE A NONDESCRIPT INSTITUTION:

A general statement of the place of the Workhouse in the American prison and reformatory system is well given by Mr. Warren F. Spalding, Secretary of the Massachusetts Prison Association, in a volume entitled "Penal and Reformatory Institutions," published by the Russell Sage Foundation. Mr. Spalding says:

"The American workhouse is a nondescript institution. If classified on the basis of the construction of its buildings, it is a prison; if its inmates are considered, it is related to the pauper institutions, for a large percentage of them are dependents; if the mental and physical condition of its inmates is considered, the workhouse belongs partly among the institutions for defectives who need restraint and hospital treatment. For dealing properly with its inmates on the basis of their character, it should be a reformatory. The inmates come through the courts, but though their acts, technically, are crimes, *in most cases they are committed for being what they are (drunkards, vagrants, idle and disorderly, tramps, etc.), rather than for criminal deeds.*

DOES MORE HARM THAN GOOD:

"The principal criticism of the workhouse must be of its system. *If properly used, it might be of great value, but as it is, it does more harm than good.* The records of every workhouse show that fully one-half of those committed have served previous sentences in the same institution, many of them twenty, fifty, a hundred. *There is absolutely nothing in the average workhouse which has as its purpose the reformation of its inmates. The promiscuous association of all classes of prisoners tends to make them worse.* The moral atmosphere should be penitential; frequently it is pestilential."

UNFAIRNESS OF THE SYSTEM:

"The most conspicuous unfairness of this system is found in the imprisonment of men for the non-payment of fines. In imposing a fine, instead of a term sentence, the court says that the offender ought not to be sent to prison. But in spite of that, he is committed, not because the court thought that a proper punishment, but because he is too poor to pay his debt to the state at a moment's notice. The private citizen can no longer collect his debts by imprisoning his debtor, but the state does it, compels him to associate with the worst of men, and turns him out with the stigma of 'jail-bird.'

"If imprisonment were necessary it might be condoned, but it has been proved that *by putting a man on probation, giving him time to earn and pay his fine, the court gets far more money than the prison collects.* The public now pays for his commitment; supports the prisoner for a time, and does not get the fine. The prisoner is also prevented from working and supporting his family. *The system discriminates between the well-to-do and the poor. The former escapes imprisonment by the payment of a few dollars; the latter is punished for being poor.*"

FAILS IN DEALING WITH DRUNKENNESS AND VAGRANCY:

The workhouse has failed conspicuously in dealing with drunkenness and vagrancy. The tramp is taken out of the community for a short time, but noth-

ing is done to eradicate the disposition to live by his wits. At the end of a definite period, fixed beforehand, he returns to the world, unchanged, often without a penny, or a home, or work, to resume his old life. For other misdemeanants the workhouse is simply a place of temporary detention."

NEED OF CLASSIFICATION:

This population is being rapidly classified in our best workhouses elsewhere—here and abroad—and treated according to the needs of each class and of each individual. For instance, the habitual drunkards who form a very large portion, and who are all physical wrecks, *are removed almost entirely from workhouse surroundings and put to farm or outdoor work* in order to build up their bodies. With physical energy and a healthy body they will be better able to resume a normal course of life. Cleveland and Kansas City have both established municipal farms for this group.

TREATMENT OF THE YOUTH:

It is a most unwholesome and unpromising procedure to compel the younger prisoners to associate so intimately with vicious and degenerate adults, as do the boys and girls under twenty in the St. Louis Workhouse. In other cities where this problem has been worked out, such young persons have been either committed to reformatories—where they usually belong—or have been separated and given appropriate training in the local houses of correction.

TREATMENT OF TRAMPS:

With the group of transient criminals, who are to be placed often under the head of tramps, the farm plan often builds them up physically, and under a careful parole system they are established in steadier ways of life. It is difficult, however, to accomplish much with the tramp, although the farm and labor colonies of the east and Europe have come as near solving the problem as any method.

NEED OF OUTDOOR WORK:

A careful examination of any workhouse population will show that a very large proportion of all offenders of all groups are much below par physically. This condition in itself is an indication that the open air, outdoor method will assist materially in bringing them back to a normal life. Even in the case of women, outdoor farm life is an admirable remedy. It is tried with great success at the New York State Reformatory at Bedford, and has been tried with success for women inebriates in England.

CLEVELAND'S EXPERIENCE:

The report of the Cleveland Board of Public Service (1909), which has developed a remarkably successful system, says:

"The fundamental thing in this movement is the attitude of friendship to the men in trouble, the giving to them the opportunity to come back to themselves and the normal life. In one of the towers there are to be three isolated rooms, strong, white and full of light, sunshine and fresh air. They are to be used as 'dungeons,' or as we prefer to call them, the rooms of the 'Thinking Tower.' The unruly will be given a bath, clean clothes, and a flood of light and air.

"Our experience with prisoners at the Farm gives us great confidence in the successful working out of our plan. The latest government statistics show that prison labor is most effective in such employment. It is far better for the prisoners and better for the public. The prisoners can do the heavier and rougher work of the farm, and this is the basis for the lighter, finer work which can be done by the old men of the Colony (almshouse)."

CLEVELAND'S PAROLE SYSTEM:

In regard to parole the report says:

"Some mistakes have been made, but the method of paroling is increasingly efficient, and in many cases brings a new hope and better life. There has been improvement and development in the use of our system of paroling prisoners."

"In the cases of neglect of families, our parole system has been especially effective, the paroles having been made on the condition that the wages should be turned over to the family. When this method succeeds, it is certainly better than keeping the men locked up in prison; better for the men, better for their families and better for society."

"The percentage of those who are returned to the House of Correction has decreased, and more and better reports have been sent in from our paroled prisoners. Efforts have been made to secure positions, *as a good opportunity to earn a living is one of the greatest preventives of crime.*"

KANSAS CITY'S SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS:

Kansas City has come to the forefront of American cities in dealing with adult offenders. A recent report of the Secretary of the Board of Pardons and Paroles says:

"In the first place, let me call your attention to the fact that *one-third of all the men committed to the workhouse have been paroled*. This is a large per cent. The inmates of the workhouse are not a selected class, such as are usually sentenced to reformatories. Many of them are habitual drunkards, dope fiends, degenerates or defectives or perverts, and have not the physical basis for self-control. Some are weak and diseased from dissipation. These cannot be paroled. The Board has used the power of parole liberally, and yet *ninety per cent of the paroles have been successful*, in the sense that the persons paroled have not again fallen under the ban of the law. The figures given by different agencies engaged in this line of work as to how many have violated their paroles are unreliable for purposes of comparison, because some do not follow up their cases closely and enforce their conditions strictly, and some do not make strict conditions to start with."

PROBLEM OF ALCOHOLISM:

On the subject of alcoholism, the greatest factor in petty crime, one authority writes:

"The principle of probationary oversight of offenders is comparatively recent in application, but the results obtained in Massachusetts, New York and other states where the principle has had extended use, are so satisfactory that the principle may now be said to have passed the experimental stage. *There is no class*

of offenders who are more in need of personal friendship, advice and co-operation than the persons who are habitual users of alcohol. To be successful, however, probation must of necessity be in the hands of broad-minded, sympathetic and tactful persons. Even then it is not satisfactory in all cases of habitual drunkenness, but the plan proposed provides for severer measures where probation does not succeed."

"There is no royal road to a cure for habitual alcoholism, but the best medical authorities are unanimous in their belief in the farm colony treatment. The prime necessities in any treatment are: isolation from alcohol for a continuous period of time, abundance of light and fresh air, therapeutic baths, and as much outdoor work as the patient is physically capable of, together with the strong personal influence of individuals who are recognized by the patients as definitely interested in their improvement."

VI. NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

A general statement of the needs of the present workhouse system is admirably given by Mr. Warren F. Spalding, Secretary of the Massachusetts Prison Association, in the Russell Sage Foundation publication, "Penal and Reformatory Institutions." Mr. Spalding says:

NEED OF PROBATION:

"The present system can be improved by a probation system which will provide for all who can be restored without imprisonment. Custodial supervision secures better results than the workhouse. For those who must be imprisoned, we need the indeterminate sentence. Why should the offender be discharged regardless of his character? Why should he serve ten sentences of one month each in a year, instead of one sentence of ten months? Many of these men (and women) will never be fit for self-support. Many are mentally defective. Why should they be at large? Why should they be released without homes, without work, and without oversight? It will cost money to fit them to earn a living, to find work for them, and to supervise them, but these things add little to the total crime bill. When we are spending so much, with almost no good result, why not add a little more, and get better returns for the money spent?"

"The workhouse should be upon a farm. Most of the inmates are unskilled, but waste land can be reclaimed by them. It is not necessary to follow county lines. Districts, composed of several counties, can be arranged to great advantage. If the expense can be borne by the state, so much the better. The system should be reformatory; saving men is saving money."

CONSTRUCTIVE REFORMATORY WORK:

"The man who enters the workhouse should be made to feel that he is expected to abandon his old life, and to enter a new one. A prisoner adopts the institution estimate of himself. If he is treated as an incorrigible, he considers himself one. If he is made to feel that he is thought to be reformable, he accepts that estimate, and if the system aims at reformation, he is likely to respond. Whatever arouses and stimulates his self-respect should be used—schools, good literature, industrial training, etc. His keepers should be men who inspire his

respect. He should be released only when fit; he should be placed in the community, and aided to get upon his feet. And he should be supervised until restoration seems complete. Changes along these lines will transform the workhouse from a temporary halting-place between two crimes to a place of permanent improvement and restoration."

RELATION BETWEEN THE COURTS AND THE WORKHOUSE:

It is impossible to recommend changes in the workhouse without taking into account its relation to the courts which send it its inmates. There is no question but that a large number of the inmates of the institution, particularly first offenders and boys and girls under twenty, *could be saved from commitment by an efficient system of investigation and parole in the trial courts. There is also no doubt but that the present system of parole through the Mayor's office could be improved with an official who could give his whole time to it.*

The problem of the relation of the courts to the workhouse and to parole is such a large one that your Committee recommends:

1. A Board of Parole:

The establishment by ordinance of a Board to be called, if so determined, "Board of Parole," with the following functions:

1. The authority exercised by the Mayor under the Charter of parole of prisoners committed to the workhouse by the police courts.

2. Of recommending to the judge of criminal courts the parole of prisoners committed by those courts to the workhouse.

3. The preliminary investigation of all police court cases with parole immediately granted in such cases as seem to merit it. In such a system parole after conviction would amount virtually to probation as practiced in juvenile courts here and adult courts elsewhere. Under such a system fines could be paid in installments, men could be kept track of, work found for them and various other remedies adopted for their welfare.

In brief such a Board would have entire charge of the admission to and releases from the workhouse and in relation to the criminal courts would be as useful as the criminal courts desire to make it.

In addition, until state legislation can be secured revising the police court system, temporary measures can be adopted under authority of ordinance, by which the judges of police courts may have the power, *first*, of paroling convicted persons, and, *second*, of giving habitual drunkards, drug fiends and like characters an opportunity of undergoing medical treatment on an indeterminate basis.

2. Changes in the Institution:

The present authorities, the Superintendent of the Workhouse and the Commissioners on Penal and Charitable Institutions, need practically no legislation for developing the workhouse as an institution. We beg to suggest to them the following changes which, in the opinion of this Committee, can be made with little additional expense and which will greatly increase the efficiency of the present institution.

The Committee recognizes that similar recommendations have been made by the Superintendent and others, although there has been no comprehensive statement of the general needs of the institution. There have doubtless been many difficulties in carrying out these recommendations and the Committee stands ready to lend the authorities all possible assistance.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Regarding the matter of sanitation and cleanliness it is possible, by a special effort, if necessary under the Board of Health, *to minimize the evil of vermin* in the institution. The bedding should be and can be cleaner and the cells made more liveable.

2. *A system of cooking and serving meals under the guidance of an experienced cook* should be worked out on a scientific basis in relation to the cost of foods and the nourishment to be derived from them in order that a plain, wholesome diet may be given the inmates that they may better do the work of the institution.

3. *The dungeons should be entirely done away with.* If separate confinement is necessary it is just as easy to get results in a light, airy and sanitary room as it is in an unhealthful dungeon. A dungeon is a relic of the old method of inquisitorial torture for inspiring goodness. A system of rewards would be even more effective for discipline than a system of punishment. On these points we refer the authorities to the experience of Cleveland and Kansas City where friendship and a "square deal" have taken the place of the old methods of punishment and repression.

4. *The industries at the workhouse can be more varied* as they have been in the Chicago House of Correction and these industries can be adapted to the various needs of the city institution so that the products manufactured will be immediately useful to the city. This is not only an economical method but will guarantee constant employment to the inmates of the workhouse with no such periods of idleness as now occur in bad weather.

5. Even under the short commitments *some constructive attempt can be made to interest the prisoners in the decencies of life.* Without much additional expense a night school could be established, possibly through the Board of Education, on payment of a nominal fee as in the public evening schools, and a library or system of circulating books can be installed by the Public Library without expense. Both a library and an evening school are recommended by the Superintendent in his report to the Mayor for 1908-09.

6. *With competent investigation before admission to the workhouse and with a system of keeping the social facts regarding prisoners, more attention can be given to segregation and individual treatment.* This problem is, of course, difficult. With a full knowledge of a man's habits and character the men and women can be grouped, especially in their cells, according to their best interests.

7. *The Institution will be much improved by the addition of hospital facilities.* On this point the Superintendent in his report for 1908-09 said, "The present over-crowded condition of the Institution does not permit the establishment of a hospital although it is one of our greatest necessities. At present we average about twelve patients at the City Hospital all the time. Prisoners who are taken

suddenly and violently ill must be transferred from the comfortable indoors, no matter what the climatic conditions might be, and then removed in an ambulance to the City Hospital, a distance of 25 blocks. We have no department for the observation of the epileptic or insane prisoners, who are from time to time committed to our care. We should have an eye and ear clinic and a well-equipped dispensary."

3. Future Arrangements:

THE WHOLE SYSTEM WRONG:

Your Committee regards our whole system of treating adult offenders as at variance with rational methods of handling them as a social problem. The whole system of fines in our police courts is wrong and unjust, but, of course, it will necessitate a change in our state laws and charter to give the court discretion in disposing of such cases. The court should be able to say whether a man should be confined, discharged or paroled. At present there is no choice save between a fine and a discharge, the injustice of the system of fines having been already shown in this report.

So far as practicable the indeterminate sentence should prevail so that, for instance, an alcoholic or drug fiend might be kept in the institution indefinitely until the community could be assured of his practical cure.

For these remedies, state legislation, now in preparation, is necessary.

NECESSITY OF A WORK-FARM:

Whatever improvements are made in the institution as it exists to-day, the Committee wants to point out emphatically that as at present situated the institution even with all these proposed improvements, cannot accomplish its fundamental purpose of reclaiming the men and women committed to it. For that purpose it is essential that the institution, or a department of it, at least, should be located on a farm and that the inmates should have an opportunity for out-of-door work. We urge that the City fall in line with this tendency of international scope and include in the next bond issue a sum for the establishment of a work-farm.

Respectfully submitted,

SOCIAL SERVICE COMMITTEE,

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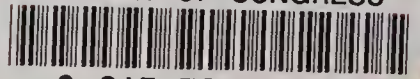
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